

In the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1, 11 and 21 as follows:

1. (amended) A horizontal form-fill and seal machine for packaging consumer products, said horizontal form-fill-and-seal machine comprising:

means for providing a continuous length of packaging film having two longitudinal edges;

means for placing said consumer products to be packaged at intervals along a longitudinal half of said continuous length of packaging film;

means for feeding a continuous supply of zippers between a center of said continuous length of packaging film and said consumer products;

means for folding said continuous length of packaging film down the center thereof and over upon said consumer products and said continuous supply of zippers;

means for sealing said continuous supply of zippers to said folded continuous length of packaging film;

means for sealing said longitudinal edges of said folded continuous length of packaging film to one another opposite to said film fold; and

means for sealing said folded continuous length of packaging film crosswise at intervals between said consumer products to create individual packages;

wherein said means for folding, said means for sealing said continuous supply of zippers, and said means for sealing said longitudinal edges are downstream from said means for placing.

11. (amended) A method for packaging consumer products on a horizontal form-fill-and-seal machine comprising:

providing a continuous length of packaging film having two longitudinal edges;

placing said consumer products to be packaged at intervals along one half of said continuous length of packaging film;

feeding a continuous supply of zippers between the center of said continuous length of packaging film and said consumer products;

folding said continuous length of packaging film continuously down the center thereof and over said consumer products and said continuous supply of zippers thereby creating a film fold;

sealing said continuous supply of zippers to said folded continuous length of packaging film;

sealing said longitudinal edges of folded continuous length of packaging film to one another opposite to said film fold;

sealing said folded continuous length of packaging film crosswise at intervals between said consumer products to create individual packages;

wherein said steps of folding, sealing said continuous supply of zippers, and sealing said longitudinal edges are downstream from said step of placing.

21. (amended) An apparatus for packaging consumer products, said apparatus comprising:

a packaging film dispenser wherein said packaging dispenser provides a continuous length of packaging film from a packaging film supply;

a product dispenser wherein said product dispenser places consumer products to be packaged at intervals along a longitudinal half of said continuous length of packaging film;

a zipper supplier wherein said zipper supplier feeds a continuous supply of zippers between a center of said continuous length of packaging film and said consumer products;

a fold-guide wherein said fold-guide folds said continuous length of packaging film down the center thereof upon said consumer products and said continuous supply of zippers;

a first sealing bar wherein said sealing bar seals the longitudinal edges of said folded continuous length of packaging film to one another opposite to said film fold;

a second sealing bar wherein said second sealing bar seals said continuous supply of zippers to packaging film; and

a heated cutter wherein said heated cutter seals said folded continuous length of packaging film crosswise at intervals between said consumer products while separating an individual package from the apparatus;

wherein said fold-guide and said first and second sealing bars are downstream from said product dispenser.